



HAF

Holiday Activities and Food

Annual report 2024



WARRINGTON
Borough Council

Introduction

The aim of the HAF programme is to make free holiday club places and nutritious food available to children eligible for benefit related free school meals, during the Easter, Summer, and Christmas holidays. The programme has been operating in Warrington since April 2021.

Research has shown that the school holidays can be pressure points for some families. For some children that can lead to a holiday experience gap.

Children from low-income households are:

- less likely to access organised out-of-school activities
- more likely to experience 'unhealthy holidays' in terms of nutrition and physical health
- more likely to experience social isolation

The HAF programme is a response to this issue. Evidence shows that free holiday clubs can have a positive impact on children and young people.

They work best when they:

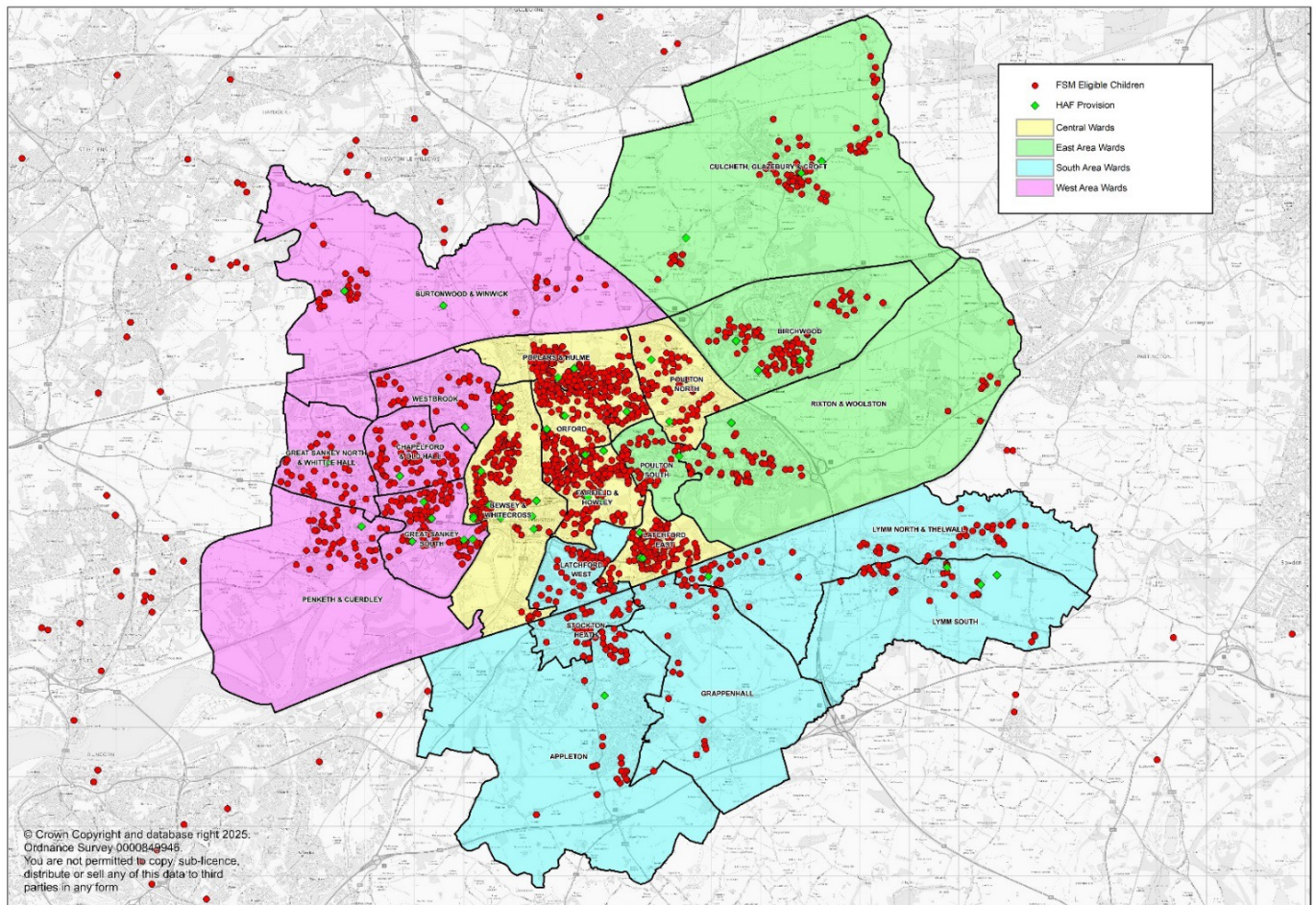
- provide consistent and easily accessible enrichment activities
- cover more than just breakfast or lunch
- involve children and parents in food preparation
- use local partnerships and connections, particularly with the VCSO sector

The HAF programme funding is primarily for school aged children from reception to year 11 (inclusive) who receive benefits-related free school meals (FSM). Local authorities have discretion to use up to 15% of their funding to provide free or subsidised holiday club places for children who are not in receipt of benefits-related FSM but who the local authority believe could benefit from HAF.



What do we know about Warrington children and free school meals?

As of January 2024, 7,356 children in Warrington were eligible for free school meals. Every year, we map our provision to show the number of children that are HAF eligible against the provision on offer. The red circles show the areas with the highest density of free school meals, whilst the green diamonds represent a HAF club. The map shows that we have HAF provision in all the areas of need.





Local Authority Details

HAF Coordinator: Hannah Green

Steering Group

Chair - Elaine Bentley Head of Service for Early Help

We held 4 steering group meetings in 2024 and membership includes a variety of partners from:

- Public Health
- Education
- Early Years
- Torus Housing Foundation
- Warrington Housing Association
- Cheshire Police
- Warrington Voluntary Action
- Bridgewater Health
- SEND team
- Warrington Play and Sensory Centre
- Local councillor

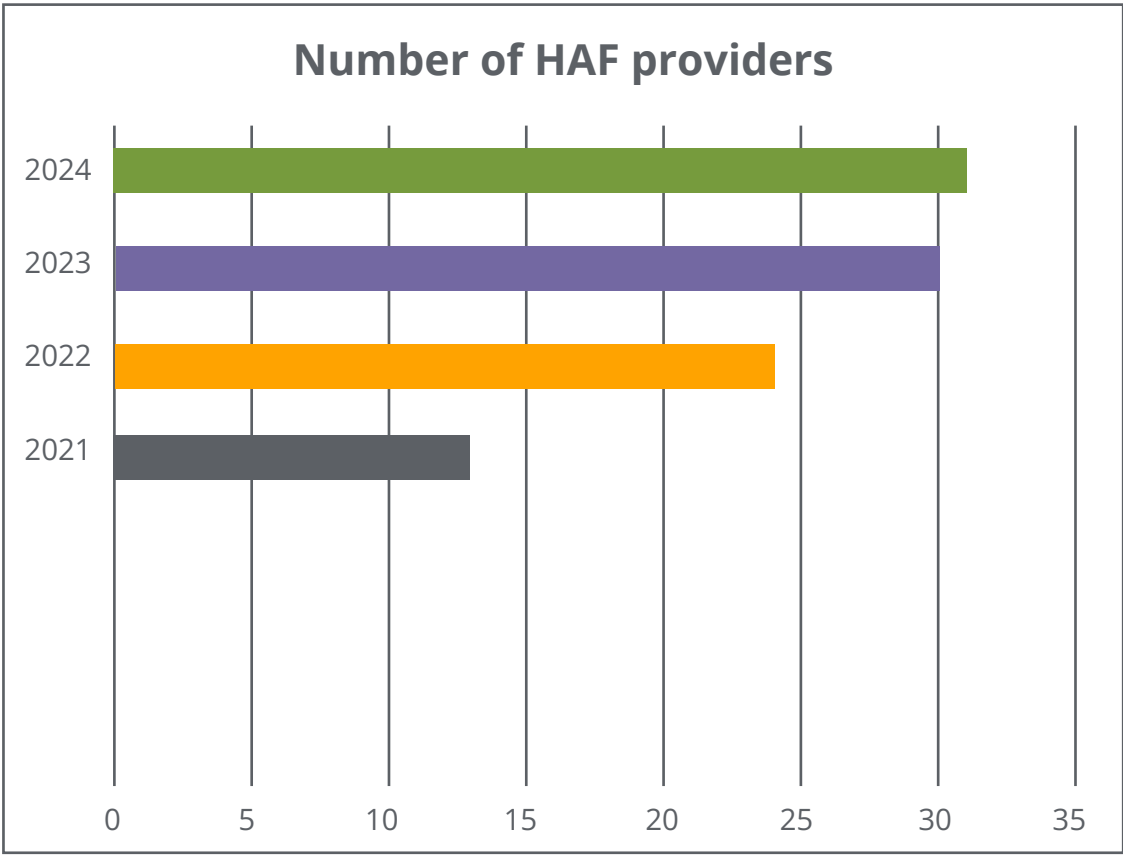
Outcomes

- Data sharing agreement in place with the free school meals team, and an updated privacy policy was developed with Information Governance.
- Centralised booking system now in place, which enables parents to search and book in one place, produces accurate attendance reports, automatically checks eligibility against the FSM list, and enables the HAF coordinator to approve any non-FSM places at the point of booking.
- Support from the Early Years Funding manager to help providers become OFSTED registered. Three clubs registered with OFSTED in 2024.
- Support offered for families that are not HAF eligible in the form of signposting them to Tax Free Childcare, claiming back childcare costs through Universal Credit and directing them to HAF clubs offering paid places at a reduced rate.
- HAF is linked to the Eat Well, Feel Well Strategy, which launched in the summer.

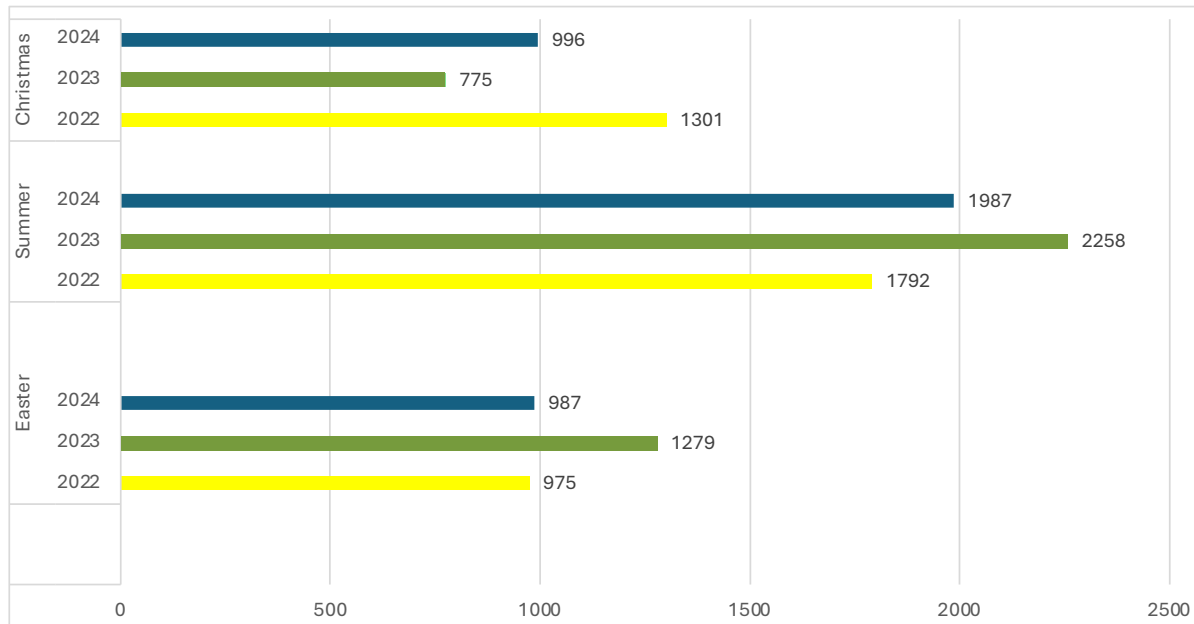
HAF providers 2024

We would like to thank all our HAF providers, who supported families in 2024. They were:

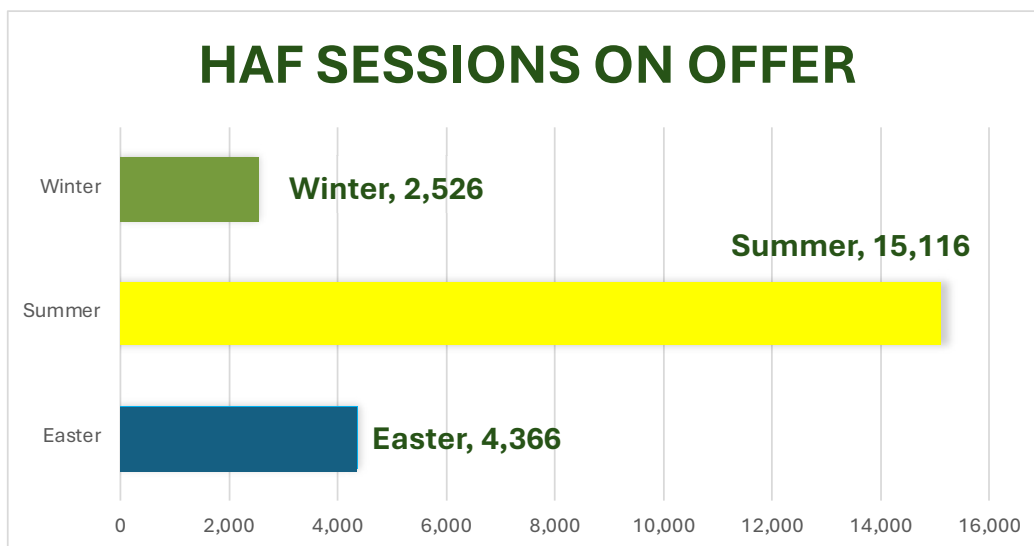
- Active Future
 - Active Sports
 - Activity 4 all
 - Adventurous Kitchen
 - Bike Right
 - Computer Xplorers
 - Croft Primary School
 - Dunky's Day Nursery
 - Families United
 - First Kick Football
 - Funky Friends Link Club
 - Hayward Performing Arts
 - Inclusive Sports 4 all
 - Jungle Mania
 - Little Superstars
- Let's Be Kids
 - Little Treasures
 - Pro Coaching Education
 - Purple Gecko
 - Rosebank Nature garden
 - Rylands FC
 - Science Fun and Crafts
 - Smart Body Sport
 - St Joseph's Family Centre
 - Striker Academy
 - Velocity Dance
 - Warrington Youth Zone
 - Warrington Wolves Foundation
 - Warrington Play and Sensory Centre
 - Wasps childcare



Attendance

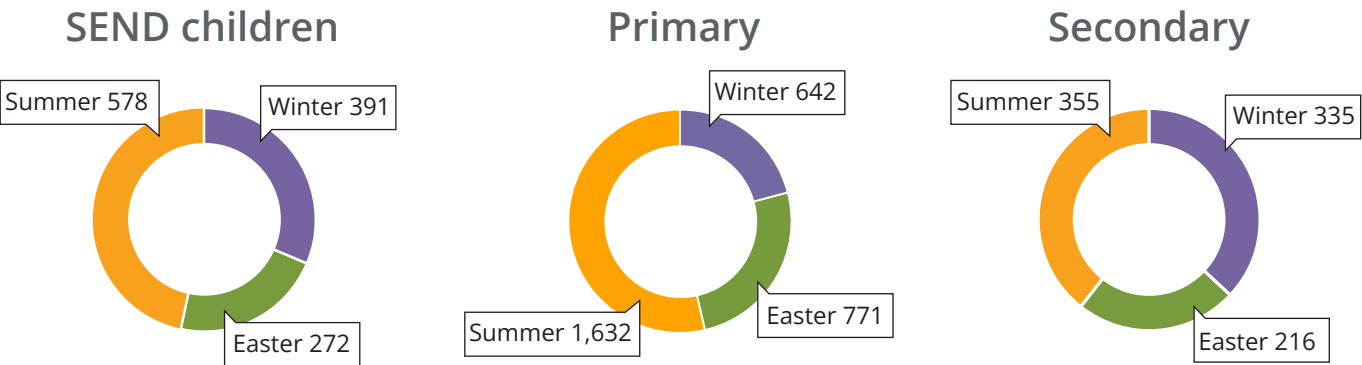


These figures represent the number of unique children who attended at least one session during each holiday period. Although there was a dip in the unique attendance numbers for Easter and Summer 2024, this is attributed to improved data accuracy. During these periods, we introduced cross-referencing to ensure each child was counted only once, even if they attended multiple clubs. In Winter 2024, we launched a new centralised booking system, which verifies eligibility, tracks the number of unique attendees, and prevents duplicate bookings.



During the Winter programme, we trialled the 2 by 2 model where each provider delivered two in-person sessions in the form of a holiday club. As part of the remote offer, families received nutritious food hampers and pantomime tickets to support engagement and enrichment at home.

“ This was such a fantastic idea. We enjoyed collecting the hampers, opening them to look through the ingredients and following the recipes. We chose the Curry. I have never made a curry without meat, all the family enjoyed it so we will definitely make this again. Thank you. ”



With a focus on developing the offer for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), 29% of attendees declared SEND in summer. We saw an increase of 151% for the secondary aged range for Winter 2024 in comparison to Winter 2023. We know that this is due to our new partnerships with Padgate Academy and Beamont Collegiate Academy, as well as the offer of food hampers, which were appealing to this age range, rather than a traditional style holiday club.



Case Studies

St Joseph's Family Centre

We welcomed a new HAF provider in the summer; St Joseph's Family Centre, who offered outstanding provision to children at Sacred Heart Primary School, St Barnabus Primary School and St Andrews CE Primary School. The centre is a Warrington based charity that has been supporting vulnerable families for decades, so they already have a good relationship with local schools.

Centre manager, Joanne Wilkison said

“ We're so proud to see the HAF Holiday Club run by St Joseph's is leaving a lasting impression on families, children, and school staff at the end of our first year of provision. Having offered emergency welfare support to local families for many years, it seemed a natural progression for us to add the HAF scheme to our service provision. Not only can we offer a safe, nurturing environment to help alleviate concerns around holiday childcare and provision of healthy, nutritious meals. We also extend our welfare support to the whole family with the provision of food parcels, low-cost meal recommendations, toiletries and children's clothing for anyone requiring a little extra support.

One of the most telling signs of the programme's success is the eagerness of children to attend the clubs. We've received so much positive feedback around children having fun and enjoying the diverse range of activities



offered as well as comments relating to the outstanding support we provide for children with additional needs who may not always enjoy a change in routine or prefer quieter spaces and activities. From sports, arts and crafts, cooking and baking, educational workshops and a forest school, the team of dedicated staff and volunteers provide an array of experiences that cater to so many different interests and needs.

The incredible success of the HAF Holiday Club at St Joseph's Family Centre highlights the importance of providing engaging and supportive environments for children during the school holidays. The overwhelmingly positive feedback from families, the enthusiasm of children, and the commendations from school staff all underscore the programme's significant impact. We can't wait to do it all again at Summer!



Computer Xplorers

Computer Xplorers have been delivering HAF since 2021 and are now an established and trusted provider in the area. They offer specialist computing classes across a variety of settings, including after-school clubs, in-school workshops, nursery sessions, holiday and weekend camps, and special events. Their mission is to inspire a love of computing in children, wherever they are. To maximise participation, the club strategically overbooks sessions, a practice that has proven effective - achieving an impressive 98% attendance rate during the summer.

"OFSTED registration and access to Tax-Free Childcare have been instrumental in making our Computer Xplorers holiday camps more accessible and trusted by families. The mixed economy model - balancing paid places with HAF-funded provision - has allowed us to reach a wider community, maintain high-quality delivery, and ensure sustainability. This approach has enabled us to support working parents while also engaging children who benefit most from structured, enriching holiday experiences."

Emily Simcox

"Our son has been attending Computer Xplorers, as our son has additional needs we've struggled to find any holiday clubs that have understood him and that he enjoys and hats down they've been amazing with him. He really enjoys the coding and it's something he has found passion in which means so much to us; thank you"

Parent's feedback



Marketing and Communication



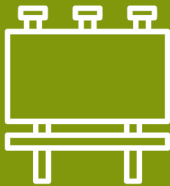
Social media advertising



Communications through schools



Communications through Early Help and Social Care colleagues



Billboards and digital screen adverts in all council buildings



Emails to Household Support Fund families



Local radio station advertising



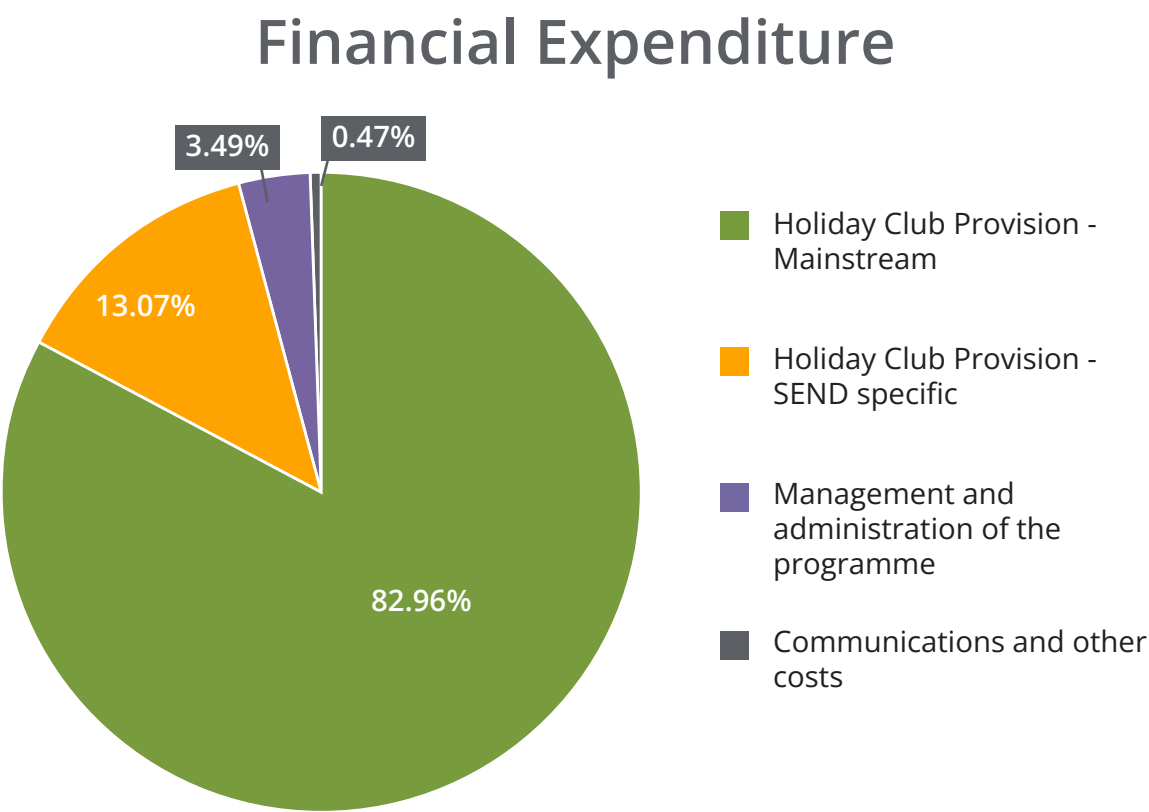
Regular maintained HAF webpage



Bus shelter adverts

Financial expenditure

Year	2024
Funding	£745,860
Face to face holiday provision	£706,038
Remote holiday club provision	£10,250
Publicising the scheme to eligible families and other communications	£1536
Capital expenditure	£0
Management and administration of the programme	£26,036
Other costs (provider training)	£2000



Match Funding

Active SEN

A huge thanks to Active SEN, who kindly gifted us with a grant of £500 to support our SEND HAF offer. This was used by Warrington Play and Sensory Centre to fund an extra HAF session for families with children that have complex needs. The centre worked in partnership with Warrington wolves to deliver family sessions in a safe and secure environment. Have a watch of their video at [PMLD - Sensory & Play.mov - Google Drive](#) to see some of the work of the amazing practice that went on over the summer.

Active Cheshire

Rylands FC secured £3850 of funding from Active Cheshire on behalf of the police and crime commissioner. Longford in Warrington was identified as an area of need due to the high rates of serious youth violence. They enhanced their HAF offer by offering places to Year 6 children transitioning to high school in the area. After attending, young people were encouraged to sign up to Rylands FC free weekend sessions and the club offered signposting information. Andrew Hibbert, Rylands FC HAF manager said 'We had 12 young people attend during the summer and the feedback we received was very positive. All young people were given tickets to attend future matches, and we have seen some of them at recent home games which is a positive, showing they have a new interest in live sport which will hopefully lead to more participation in future.'

Oral Health

As part of the Cheshire and Merseyside 'All Together Smiling' programme, which aims to improve oral health in 2-7 year olds in the region, we partnered with our local Public Health team to give out 1000 toothbrushes, toothpaste and information leaflets to children attending a holiday club in summer and winter. HAF Providers were given oral health resources to promote good oral health habits, model regular effective tooth brushing and educate the children about healthy eating.

Bikeability

We partnered with Bike Right, who utilised Bikeability funding over the summer to provide HAF activities at a reduced cost. Through this partnership, Bike Right secured £2,184 in funding. They also delivered a successful 'Learn to Ride' session at the Children's Centre, where children were taught to ride bikes independently, without stabilisers.

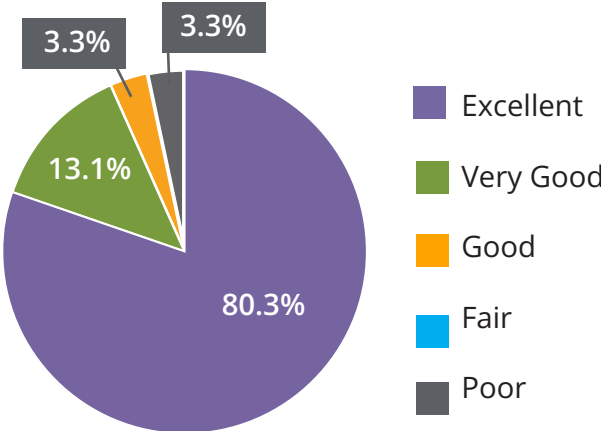
Morrisons

We worked with Morrisons supermarket in the summer, who kindly donated £200. This was used to fund breakfast for children attending Let's Be Kids, which meant the children had two funded meals during the summer holidays.

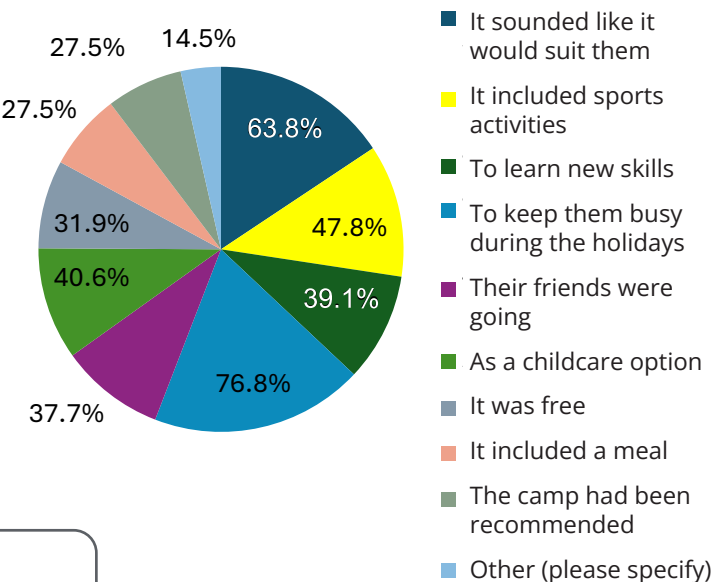


Survey results

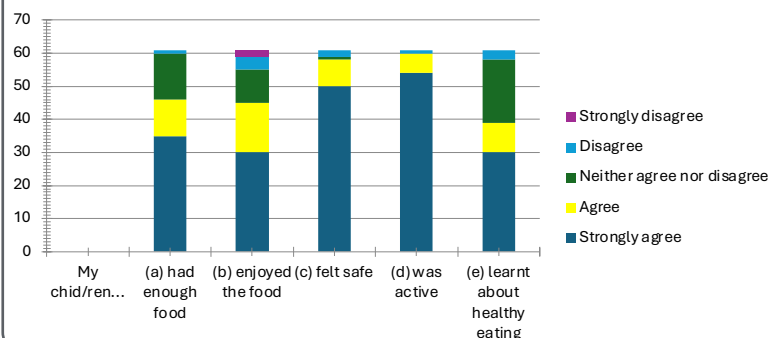
Overall, how would you rate the Warrington Holiday Activities and Food programme this summer?



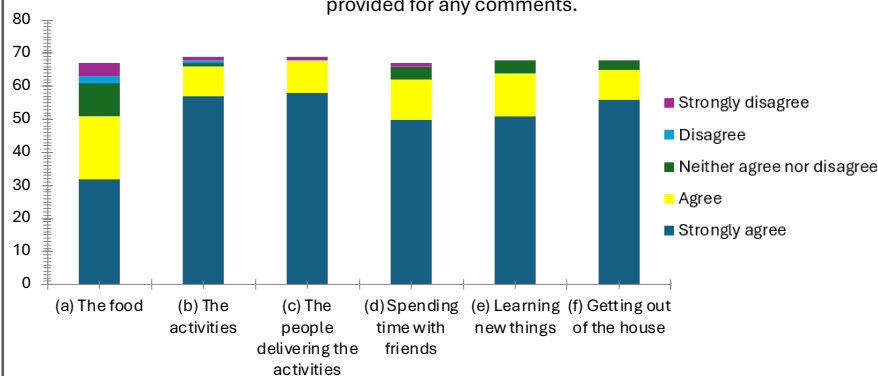
What were your main reasons for booking a place(s) on the Warrington Holiday and Food (HAF) programme for summer 2024?
Select all that apply



Thinking about the sessions, please state to what extent overall you agree or disagree with the following statements? Select one option in each row and use the space provided for any comments.



What aspects of the Warrington Holiday and Activities Food Programme did your child/ren enjoy? Select one option in each row and use the space provided for any comments.



Highlights of 2024



Centralised booking system in place to support booking and data accuracy



Programme delivered within budget



Safeguarding training delivered to all providers



Mixed economy models



Growth of secondary aged attendance



Top up funding received from Certas Energy, Active Cheshire and Active SEN

Feedback we have received

A child was asked) What would you be doing at home? 'Playing Fortnite. I usually play 11 hours a day at home.' (What do you do here?) 'Make new friends and play football.'
A child at Let's Be Kids

I don't have any pencils at home so I like colouring and crafting here'
Boy aged 7 at Little Treasures club

My daughter really struggles to make new friends and this gave her an opportunity to do so in a safe environment, all the staff are so helpful and she loved it that much she now attends regularly. Thank you so much!

'I am having a great time. I have had lots of rough times in my life this year and this club has helped me to get through. I love it here'
Boy attending Computer Explorers

The pantomime was a magical experience - enjoyed by all of us. It made our Christmas extra special- and without this HAF funding - this wouldn't have been a possibility for us, due to the ever rising cost of living."

"I am a lone parent and I have very little support in the area due to coming here some years ago fleeing DV. These holiday camps are so important for people like myself because school holidays are extremely difficult with a very active child with tons of energy that needs burning, I have found myself burnt out trying to do this alone during previous school holidays and myself and my daughter have felt huge relief from this time away from each other as it's always just been me and her, this has really been a lifeline for me and we are excited for future school holiday clubs."

"The HAF projects we are able to provide for our local community are so important. The numbers have grown year on year and the feedback has been fantastic. The fact that we are able to blend this in with our paid for provision means that it's a real boost to our business but more importantly, children from local schools get to spend time together being active regardless of their family situations which is so good for them both physically and mentally."

Andrew Hibbert, Rylands FC

The power of the HAF programme goes beyond simply providing activities and food to young people. It connects HAF providers with their community, ensuring that the most vulnerable of our society are seen and heard in a way that enables us to give practical support, precisely where it is most needed.'

Sam Stewart, Youth Zone



Plan and Objectives for 2025

- Provide access to training for HAF providers to further develop the nutritional education element of HAF.
- To continue to increase secondary aged reach by targeting areas where young people are at risk of ASB or isolation.
- To further develop partnerships through the Eat Well Feel Well Strategy (Healthy Weight Declaration), such as with the Active Travel team and Public Health.

To find out more about the Holiday Activities and Food in Warrington, please visit warrington.gov.uk/haf or email haf@warrington.gov.uk